

San Francisco Examiner  
24 November 1968

# Spy Scandal Called Fraud

By JOHN LANE  
EXAMINER-LONDON  
DAILY EXPRESS

BONN — Was the great spy scandal really the great spy fraud?

Flabbergasted West Germans are asking this question after the most sensational series of spy scares in the country's history.

Crammed into one eventful month were enough hair-raising goings-on to make a James Bond story look like kids' stuff.

So incredible, in fact, has been the scene here, that the deep suspicion has grown that the whole thing was engineered by the Russians.

Many experts reckon that the Russians, guiltily furious with West Germany for allegedly prompting the Czechs to defy Moscow and therefore for "causing" the invasion, decided to get even.

And by means of various spy affairs have managed to drive a wedge between West Germany and her NATO Allies, and even between West Germany and Czechoslovakia.

On the evidence so far available, this theory seems quite a reasonable one.

Consider some of the more bizarre events:

- At the height of the scandal it comes out that a Sidewinder air-to-air missile, stolen from a German Air Force base a year before, had been sent to Russia by ordinary air freight.

- Where did this new evidence come from and why at that particular time? No one is saying. But it makes sense to suggest that Russia could have supplied it to make the Germans look ridiculous.

General Sverek, head of the Czechoslovakian Ceteka news agency in Bonn, is interrogated for al-

did these new accusations come from just at a most embarrassing moment for the harassed security chiefs? No one is saying.

Or take, for instance, the case of Hermann Luedke, the retired vice-admiral whose death sparked off the chain reaction in Bonn.

Some of the wilder reports have likened him to Cicero, the man who used a mini-camera to pass wartime British secrets to the Germans.

But would a Cicero in his right mind have handed over his vital rolls of exposed films for an ordinary photographic dealer to develop?

That was just what Luedke did. An assistant in the shop noticed pictures of secret NATO documents on the films and informed the police.

But the documents were out of date and of little military significance.

Had they been "planted" on the roll by someone wishing to incriminate the admiral? It certainly seems a possibility.

Then after being questioned by security men and released for lack of definite evidence of spying, Luedke was found shot some days later near a friend's hunting lodge.

An experienced huntsman, he had a bullet wound in his back. Had Luedke been murdered? The possibility of this cannot lightly be dismissed.

Then came the string of suicides which made West German security systems, or lack of them, the laughing-stock of the world. Although perhaps some NATO Allies weren't laughing much.

If the Russians really did set out to harm West Germany's image in the eyes of the Allies, they certainly suc-